

The Interagency
Archeological Services Division,
National Park Service

A status report to the archeological community

March, 1976





United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H22-PI

Dear Colleagues:

Implementation of the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-291; the "Moss-Bennett" Act) has given increased responsibility to the Interagency Archeological Services Division of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service. Not surprisingly, considering the mysterious ways in which the Federal establishment sometimes seems to move, the Nation's archeologists have seemed unsure of the mission and mechanics of our program and have wondered about the relationship of Interagency Archeological Services to other elements of the National Park Service, other State and Federal agencies, and the professional community. Now that the program has begun to pass through its natal period we believe the time has come for a status report to the archeological community that supplements our more formal and statistical Annual Report to the Congress. The report is divided into three parts: (1) mission and objectives, (2) staff professional quality, and (3) archeological contracting. We welcome your comments on the substance of this report.

Sincerely yours,

Rex L. Wilson
Departmental Consulting
Archeologist

Enclosure



I. BACKGROUND

At virtually every stage in the development of American archeology, some government agency has acted as the discipline's interface with the Federal establishment. The nature of this interface has reflected and affected the practice of archeology and the construction of archeological law. The Interagency Archeological Services Division (IAS), National Park Service is the latest of these interfaces. As a replacement of the Interagency Archeological Investigations and Salvage Program whose scope essentially had been limited to implementation of the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960, the IAS program is a broader and more complex managerial system reflecting the complexities of contemporary environmental and historic preservation law and policy and the increasing sophistication and professionalization of archeology.

The Division is also a reflection of the increased recognition given to archeology and historic preservation by the Federal Government. Whereas its predecessor operated as a minor program of the National Park Service (NPS) handled through NPS Regional Offices or archeological centers whose primary mandate was the administration of the National Parks, the Interagency Archeological Services Division is a prominent element of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) whose clear and straightforward mission is the identification, protection, and enhancement of the nation's cultural resources.

A. Coordination with historic preservation agencies. The position of IAS within OAHP makes possible a close working relationship with the

restricted administration of survey and salvage contracts, current IAS activities have greater breadth. Contract operations remain an important part of our business, however, and a concerted attempt is being made to upgrade the scientific and legal adequacy of that work (see Sections II and III of this report). We also are becoming more heavily involved in other types of interaction, including:

1. *Experimental programs.* IAS has written contracts for a series of studies related to the general issue of planning in the management of archeological resources, i.e., attempting to link up predictive statements about the distribution of archeological resources with the projected future distribution of land-uses that could damage such resources. Studies have been undertaken in eastern New England, the St. Louis area, the Gulf of Mexico outer continental shelf, and oil shale lands in Utah, Colorado and Wyoming. Analysis of these and related studies is currently leading to the development of a set of procedures for comprehensive archeological planning to be implemented by State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO's) and other resource managers. Contracts for other innovative studies will be undertaken as needs are recognized and funds become available.
2. *Professional input.* IAS has contracted with the Society for American Archaeology for a series of six conferences to develop concepts and recommendations from within the archeological discipline about such matters as professional standards, standards for report preparation, cultural resource management,

The heavy emphasis upon liaison in the mission of IAS requires an organization that facilitates communication with governmental agencies, industry, and the archeological profession; provides for maintenance of high standards of professionalism; and permits its personnel to devote full attention to program needs and responsibilities. To achieve this, program responsibility and oversight are conducted from the Washington office while three field offices--in Atlanta, Denver and San Francisco--were established in June 1975, to manage day-to-day program activities. These field offices (Table 1) are now completely separate from the National Park Service Regional offices, archeological centers and parks.

Each field office oversees approximately one-third of the Nation. Their respective boundaries are drawn along major drainages (dotted lines on Figure 1) to facilitate coordination with water resource development agencies (e.g., Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation). For coordination with agencies whose programs are organized on a State boundary basis (e.g., Soil Conservation Service, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Highway Administration, etc.) the field office territories are drawn along State lines (solid lines on Figure 1).

II. PROFESSIONAL QUALITY

A frequent and serious problem for archeologists engaged primarily in administration is that of maintaining professional skills and involvement. Administrative archeologists have all too frequently become "fossilized" in their professional development and the management of contract programs in the past by such archeologists has perniciously affected the Federal Government's ability to procure high quality

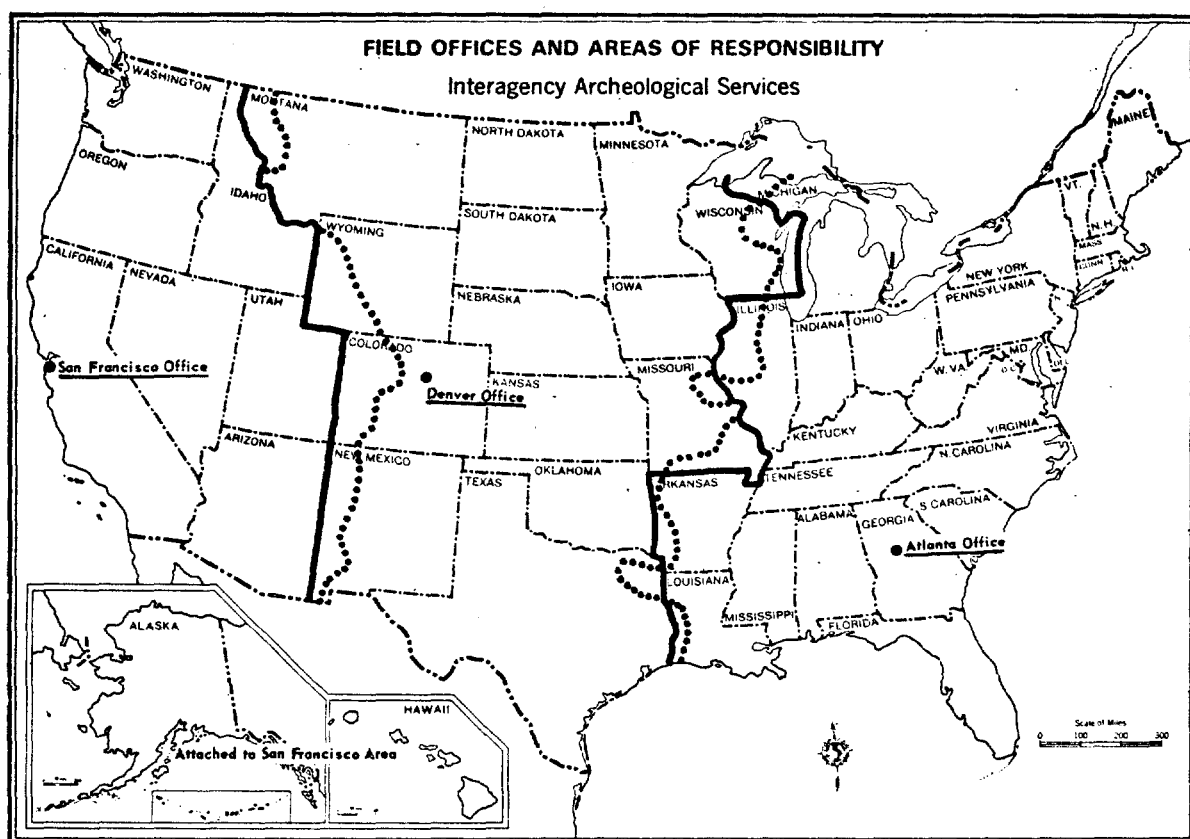


Figure 1: Map showing IAS field office locations and areas of responsibility.

archeological studies. Accordingly, we are taking steps to avoid recreating the professional adequacy problem which the establishment of this Division was intended to correct. Our efforts focus on four aspects of this problem:

- A. *Increasing the number of archeologists working on external archeological programs;*
- B. *Elevation of expectations for the level of professional training and experience necessary in staff archeologist positions.*

Table 2: Personnel roster

INTERAGENCY ARCHEOLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Washington, D.C.

| NAME | ORGANIZATIONAL TITLE | HIGHEST DEGREE | THESIS/DISSERTATION TOPICS |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <u>Washington Office</u> | | | |
| Rex L. Wilson | Departmental Consulting Archeologist & Division Chief, Supervisory Archeologist | MA-University of Oklahoma ABD-University of Oklahoma (Ph.D. expected 1976) | "Management in the Federal Archeological Programs" |
| Lawrence E. Aten | Deputy Division Chief, & Coordinator, Executive Order 11593 Program, Supervisory Archeologist | BS-(Geology) University of Houston ABD-University of Texas Austin (Ph.D. expected August 1976) | "Cultural Ecology of the Upper Texas Coast" |
| Charles M. McKinney | Archeologist, & Coordinator, Federal Antiquities Program | MA-American University (1974) | "Scavenger Displacement of Faunal Resources: Implications for Archaeological Site Interpretation" |
| *Thomas F. King | Archeologist | Ph.D.-1976, University of California/Riverside | "Political Differentiation Among Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherers: An Archaeological Test" |
| Ronald C. Corbyn | Archeologist | BS-(Geology) West Texas State; MA-Pennsylvania State University (expected 1976) | "Archeological Photointerpretation of the Deer Creek Site, Kay County, Oklahoma" (research paper) |
| *Pandora E. Snethkamp | Archeologist (student intern) | BA-1974, SUNY/Buffalo MA-(expected 1976) SUNY/Binghamton | "Contracts, Research and Funding: The Worcester Archaeological District as a Case Example" |
| *Julia O. Elmendorf | Archeologist (student intern) | BA-1974, George Washington University MA-(expected 1976) Catholic University | "The Relationship Between Evidence of Nutritional Deprivation and Life Expectancy in Two Ossuary Skeletal Populations from Nanjemoy Creek, Maryland" |
| *Janet G. Kopleck | Social Science Aid (Anthropology) | AB-(Anthropology) 1973 University of California/Berkeley | -- |
| <u>Atlanta Office</u> | | | |
| **Bennie C. Keel | Chief, Atlanta office Supervisory Archeologist | Ph.D.-1972, Washington State University | "Woodland Facets of the Appalachian Summit Area" |
| Wilfred M. Husted | Supervisory Archeologist | MA-1962, University of Colorado | "A Proposed Archeological Chronology for Rocky Mountain National Park Based on Projectile Points and Pottery" |
| Victor A. Carbone | Archeologist | Ph.D.-1976, Catholic University | "Environment and Prehistory in the Shenandoah Valley" |
| Harry G. Scheele | Archeologist | Ph.D.-1970, Harvard University | "Chavin Influence on the Central Coast of Peru" |
| **Vacant-in process of recruitment | Archeologist | Ph.D. level | -- |

that representing archeologists trained to the baccalaureate level, whereas the present mode represents archeologists trained to the masters and doctoral levels. This change did not occur casually or through the normal course of events. It resulted from a deliberate selection process and from careful setting of standards and objectives for staff personnel.

Having initiated progress toward upgrading the level of quality in the professional staff, we have lately turned to the matter of trying to prevent, or at least to retard, the intellectual fossilization referred to earlier. While we believe that maintaining one's professional credentials is essentially a personal responsibility, at the same time it is clearly in the interest of the Division's objectives for us to encourage professional "maintenance." For this reason, we have established a program whereby archeologists working within the Division for more than six months, who are not on student appointments and who are satisfactorily performing their regular duties may be allowed to use up to 20 percent of their work time for a structured schedule of professional development activity such as research, reading or academic coursework. A program such as this is in no sense a luxury, but is fundamental to accomplishment of our mission.

We believe that an archeological staff no matter how well qualified, however, cannot capitalize on its professional strengths unless permitted to function in an administrative setting which allows this professionalism to be applied. Major innovations in the area of procurement (to be described in the next section of this report) cannot function except in a setting of high professional competency. Beyond

Division and the external archeology program with comprehensive policy guidance on a wide range of issues. We continue to revise and augment these policy statements to deal more adequately with current archeological problems. For example, it was recently necessary to clarify our policies regarding (1) disposition of excavated materials (we prefer they remain in or near the region from which they were excavated); and (2) the notion that archeological sites can be preserved by burial under earth or other fill (we do not consider this a mitigation technique except under very special circumstances).

III. CONTRACTING

The "old" Interagency Archeological Investigations and Salvage Program evolved in response to an emergency need--that of "beating the bulldozer." Contracting procedures tended to grow with the program and accumulated many inherent problems, most of which tended to be overlooked because "we were getting the job done." Some of the more obvious drawbacks were:

- A. Salvage archeology generally was the only possible response when archeological resources were threatened. Needs for salvage were largely determined by the contractor during the contract negotiation stage. Surveys and salvage were undertaken simultaneously and often without an overall research plan. The National Park Service exercised only nominal responsibility in identifying research needs, reviewing research designs, and defining possible expected research results.

Traditionally little more than descriptive reports of findings was explicitly required and reports were often accepted without adequate professional critique or consideration of whether they met acceptable contemporary professional standards.

Meeting National Park Service report standards had often come to mean an exceptionally low threshold of adequacy. Under the contract administration practices in earlier days there was little consistent effort to promote professional adequacy in the identification of research needs in development of contract proposals, in generating research designs, and in evaluation of results.

If we have learned anything at all during the past years of archeological salvage, it was that the program will not manage itself; wherein contractors, on their own volition, would employ the best methods for the most important problems on the most significant sites and report these results in a timely fashion so as to make real contributions to knowledge. In the process, "salvage archeology" has been widely disparaged as second rate archeology. In recognition of the development of important trends toward the solution of many theoretical and methodological problems the National Park Service has joined in these efforts with the objectives of improving the quality and timeliness of salvage archeology operations. More or less simultaneously with the development of this basic commitment to change by the IAS Division, we were advised by our legal counsel that serious legal defects demanding immediate correction existed in our current contracting process. Federal

precise specifications for required services and end products. But we have abandoned sole source contracting with the larger educational institutions as basic policy. This practice unduly restricts the research market, discourages intellectual growth and innovation, and unfairly and illegally eliminates qualified small institutions, private concerns and individuals from consideration for contracts.

Negotiated procurement involves several steps; basically, these are:

- A. Preparation and distribution of a Request for Proposals.
- B. Evaluation of proposals for technical adequacy.
- C. Negotiation with offerers of technically adequate proposals and discussion of price.
- D. Selection of proposal and award of contract.
- E. Ongoing review of contractor's work progress and performance.
- F. Technical review of draft final report for professional and contractual adequacy.
- G. Acceptance of final report and completion of contract.

Preparation by the IAS Division of a Request for Proposals (RFP) includes the scope-of-work stating the purpose and circumstances of the investigations needed; technical background information on the resources to be investigated; and minimal preservation or research needs that have been identified through prior research in the area and have been agreed upon through compliance with the procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

be necessary to negotiate the actual contract price, selection of the successful offerer by the IAS Division is not and will not be solely on the basis of price. All organizations and individuals who submitted proposals which, in turn, were not selected for contract award are entitled to a full written debriefing as to the reasons for this. And finally, once a contract has been written, we will maintain a closer coordination with the contractor as work is in progress to assure that Federal agency commitments for archeological mitigation are being carried out. Final evaluation of reports of investigations will receive careful written evaluation by either IAS staff archeologists or by outside peer reviewers.

We believe the result will be to create a fair and open research market for investigations, in which any qualified institution, private corporation, or individual may compete for contracts on the basis of their qualifications and the merits of their preservation plan or research design proposal. We view this approach to contracting as a means of introducing and encouraging fresh approaches and new vitality in resource preservation and research, and as a means by which a broader range of archeological interests ultimately will be served. The challenges we face have never been greater nor has there ever been a greater opportunity on our part to contribute substantially to knowledge. Our success or failure depends altogether on how much effort we are willing to invest.